

are we going to deal with the environmental challenges of global warming and grow the economy? How are we going to give all working people the security of access to health care and world-class education for their kids? How are we going to proceed in a world full of uncertainty, where you have to make complicated judgments about the security threats out there and still try to build a better and brighter future based on trade, not conflict, based on lifting labor standards and environmental standards, not walking away from the human rights of the people of the world? How are we going to do these things?

The answer is, we ought to pick the person who is the best qualified person based on experience. We ought to pick the person who has proved that he makes good decisions based on lots of evidence. We ought to pick a person whose mind and heart have always been focused on the future that his children—now his grandchild—and all of our children ought to have. Al Gore should be, and with your help, will be, the next President of the United States of America.

Ladies and gentlemen, Vice President Al Gore.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 9:15 p.m. at the MCI Center. In his remarks, he referred to Edward G. Rendell, national chair, Joseph J. Andrew, national finance chair, Representative Loretta Sanchez, general cochair, Mayor Dennis W. Archer of Detroit, MI, general cochair, and Terence McAuliffe, former national finance chair, Democratic National Committee. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady, Vice President Gore, and Tipper Gore.

Proclamation 7313—Day of Honor, 2000

May 24, 2000

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

Fifty-five years ago this month, the torch of freedom burned bright in Europe once again as Nazi Germany surrendered to the Allied Forces. Four months later, with the defeat of Imperial Japan, World War II—

history's bloodiest and most destructive conflict—finally came to an end.

That war's unprecedented threat to world peace, freedom, and human rights called forth an unprecedented response from the American people. United and determined after the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, American men and women poured into factories and shipyards, working around the clock to build ships, planes, tanks, and guns. Millions of others risked their lives to defend our Nation and preserve the ideals of democracy. By the war's end, some 15 million had served in our Armed Forces, including more than 1,200,000 African Americans, 300,000 Hispanic Americans, 50,000 Asian Americans, 20,000 Native Americans, 6,000 Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, and 3,000 Native Alaskans.

These minority members of our Armed Forces served with honor and distinction in battles around the globe. Many of them—like the Tuskegee Airmen, the Japanese American troops of the Army's "Go For Broke" regiment, and the Native American Code Talkers who played a vital role in winning the war in the Pacific—were renowned for their bravery and dedication. America's minority veterans fought other important battles as well—battles against prejudice, ignorance, and discrimination. Many gave their lives on foreign soil for the freedom they had never fully shared at home. Many of those who survived returned home from the war and worked to make real in America the ideals for which they had fought so hard and for which so many of their comrades in arms had died.

On this Day of Honor, we have the opportunity—and the responsibility—to acknowledge the contributions our minority veterans have made to the peace and freedom we enjoy today. I ask my fellow citizens to join me in saluting the African American, Hispanic American, Asian American, Native American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, Native Alaskan, and other minority members who served so valiantly in our Armed Forces during World War II and to remember those who died in service to our country. Their extraordinary devotion to duty is a reminder to us all that our Nation's diversity is not a

cause for division, but rather one of our greatest strengths.

The Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 44, has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in recognition of the minority veterans who served in World War II.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 25, 2000, as the Day of Honor, 2000. I call upon all Americans to observe this day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities paying tribute to the service and sacrifice of the minority veterans of our Armed Forces who served during World War II.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fourth day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 30, 2000]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 25, and it will be published in the *Federal Register* on May 31.

Remarks on Proposed Medicare Prescription Drug Benefits and an Exchange With Reporters

May 25, 2000

The President. Thank you very much. Senator Daschle, Congressman Gephardt, Members of the House and Senate leadership, and Secretary Shalala. Let me say how much I appreciated the meeting we had this morning and how much I support the agenda they outlined. I'd like to say a few words about it, myself. But before I do, I'd like to put it into some larger context of our overall strategy.

We just have some new evidence that our long-term strategy of fiscal discipline, investing in our people, and expanding opportunities for American markets' products around the world is working. Revised GDP figures released today confirm that our economy grew at 5.4 percent in the first quarter and that business investment soared by 25 per-

cent. This strategy has now given us over 7 years of growth and investment, the longest economic expansion in history. We ought to stay on the path that got us here and continue to invest in our people and their future, as our leaders have outlined today.

Last month—I want to emphasize this—just last month the distinguished investment firm in New York of Goldman-Sachs estimated that that turnaround from record deficits to record surpluses has kept interest rates 2 full percentage points lower than they would have been without this strategy. Therefore, if we turn away from it and go back to the deficits, we can expect a corresponding rise in interest rates. A 2 percent cut in interest rates on home mortgages, car loans, college loans, credit card bills, has been an enormous, effective tax cut to the American people and has done a great deal to strengthen our economy.

That's why we feel so strongly that we should use this moment of unprecedented prosperity to lengthen the life and modernize Medicare with a prescription drug benefit, to strengthen Social Security, to invest in key priorities, especially education, to have a tax cut we can afford, and keep paying that debt down to keep those interest rates down.

Now, as you've heard already, we mostly discussed providing prescription drugs for America's seniors in that meeting. I want to thank these leaders for standing with us on this important issue. This is a show of unity and a demonstration of resolve. There is no reason that Congress cannot take the necessary steps to ensure that every older American has access to the lifesaving, life-enhancing prescription drugs they need.

Now, just a few weeks ago Senator Daschle and Congressman Gephardt came here to announce that the Democrats were united in a single strategy to provide these prescription drugs. Today they will be joined by leading architects and backers of the plan—all these people behind me who have worked on the details. So we now know exactly how we would do this. We know we can afford it, and we think the time to act is now. I'll just say this one more time. If we were creating Medicare today, there is no way in the wide world we wouldn't provide prescription drugs.